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INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000079

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2020  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [UNSC](#) [AS](#)  
SUBJECT: STRONG SUPPORT FOR U.S. POSITION ON IRAN

REF: SECSTATE 9124

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Edgard D. Kagan for reasons 1.4(b)(d)

¶1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: Australia will support efforts to increase pressure on Iran, whether through the United Nations or other channels. A policy paper has already been written outlining specific measures Australia could take. The United States can count on strong Australian support, regardless of how it chooses to move forward. END SUMMARY.

On Board With or Without the U.N.  
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¶2. (C/NF) During a meeting with the Deputy Chief of Mission, National Security Advisor Duncan Lewis told us that he agrees with the U.S. assessment of the situation. Lewis realizes the time has come to increase the pressure on Iran, and said that he has been expecting a message along the lines of reftel demarche for some time. Australia is prepared to support the United States both in the United Nations and through unilateral sanctions if necessary.

¶3. (C/NF) While Australia will support action in the United Nations, Lewis sees unilateral sanctions as more practical. Lewis and Marnie Wright, Middle East Section Director for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) both made clear that Australia will be a vocal supporter of any effort to impose sanctions on Iran through the United Nations. Still, Lewis questioned whether there would be enough support in the Security Council. Australia is also strongly in favor of working with allies to impose sanctions outside of the U.N. structure.

Ready to Impose Sanctions, If Needed  
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¶4. (C/NF) DFAT is prepared to impose sanctions on Iran quickly. Last October, DFAT prepared a document outlining measures that could be imposed against Iran should engagement fail. This document has been kept current and spells out specific sanctions aimed at Iran's finances and the Revolutionary Guard. Marnie Wright, Middle East Section Director for DFAT, also said that Australia is contemplating sanctions against Iranian oil and natural gas, but that economic factors made this proposal more complicated.

Comment  
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¶5. (C/NF) Officials will follow the U.S. lead on Iran and would be receptive to any input on how best to proceed. Australia can be counted as a strong supporter of whatever course the United States chooses to pursue.

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